



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

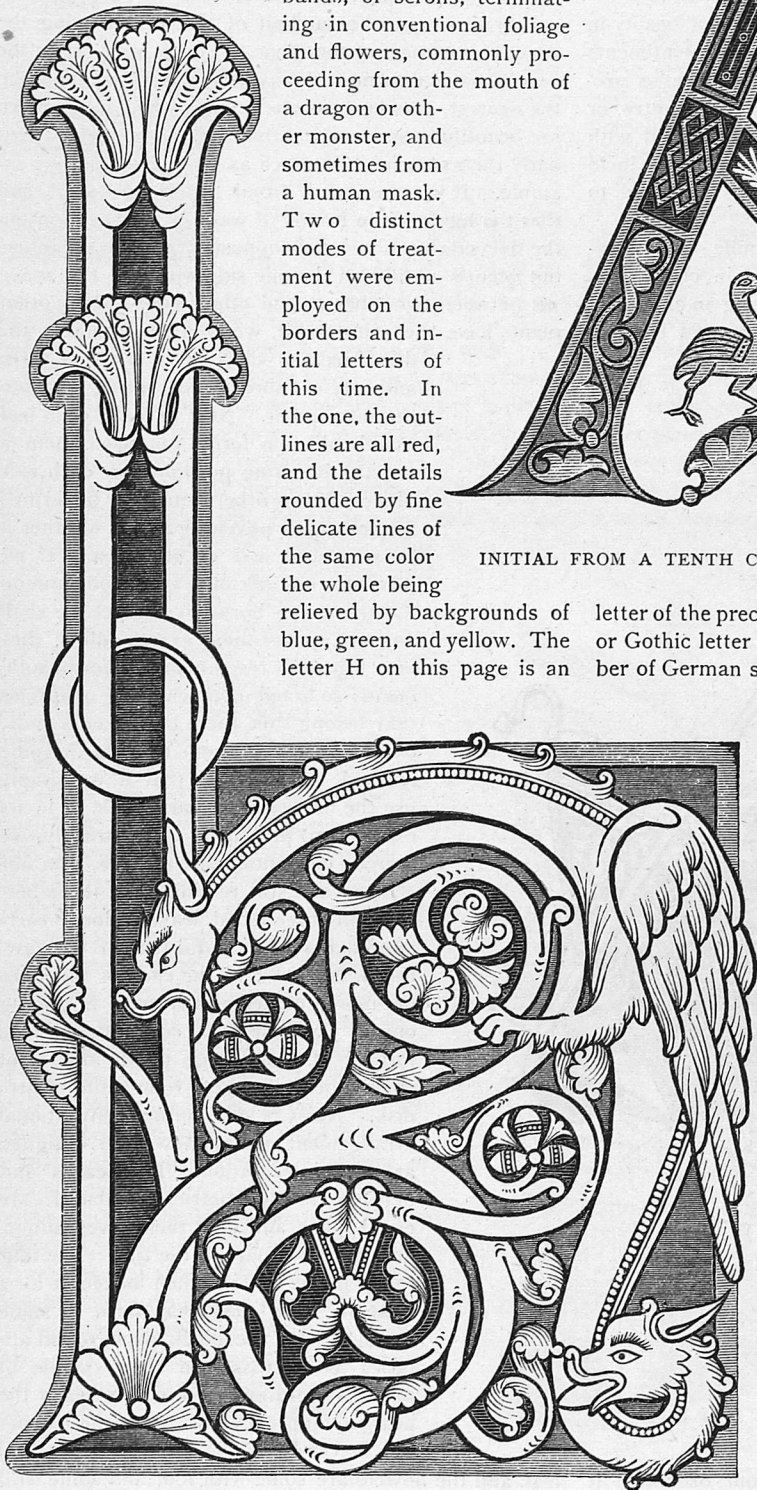
JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

THE ART OF ILLUMINATION.

II.

ILLUMINATIONS of the twelfth century are more easily distinguished than those of any other period. Manuscripts of an immense size were then produced, and the principal capital letters were frequently from twelve to eighteen inches in length, and sometimes longer, occupying, in fact, the greater part of the page on which they appear. Simplicity, elegance, and accuracy of drawing were their leading characteristics. They were usually formed of continuous or interlacing

bands, or scrolls, terminating in conventional foliage and flowers, commonly proceeding from the mouth of a dragon or other monster, and sometimes from a human mask. Two distinct modes of treatment were employed on the borders and initial letters of this time. In the one, the outlines are all red, and the details rounded by fine delicate lines of the same color the whole being relieved by backgrounds of blue, green, and yellow. The letter H on this page is an

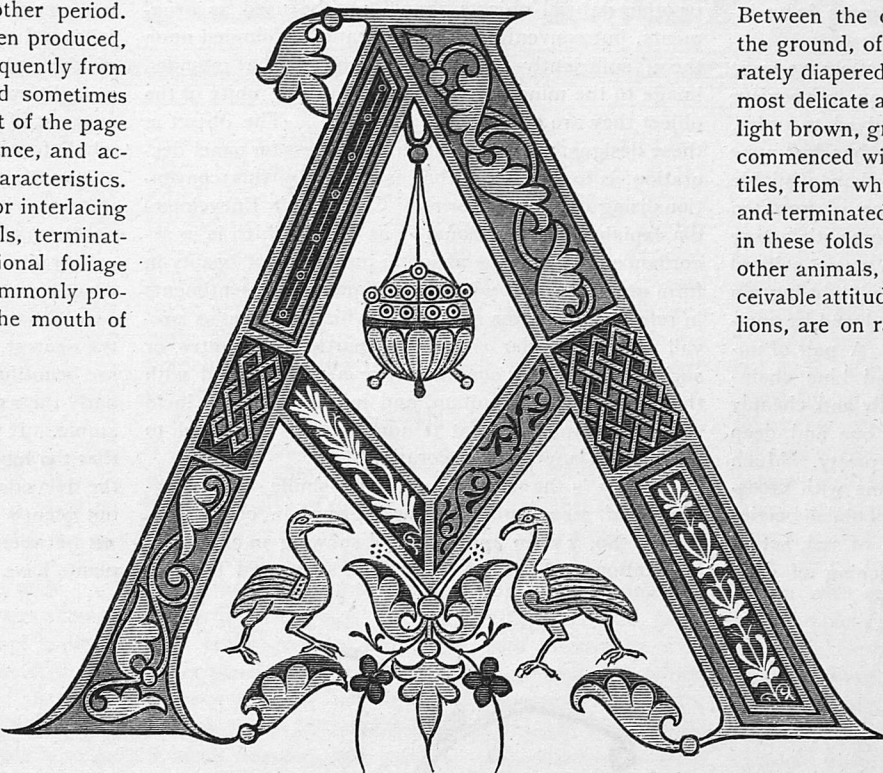


INITIAL FROM A TWELFTH CENTURY MANUSCRIPT.

example of this style of art. In the other, these bands, branches, and flowers were colored in gradations of the richest tints, heightened on the outer edge with pure white, and made distinct by a bold black outline. The ground was sometimes formed of various colors almost equally distributed, sometimes partially of gold, and often wholly so. Occasionally the figure of the prophet, apostle, or historian of the text following is introduced, commonly having a scroll in his right hand bearing an inscription. It is worthy of remark that the figures introduced at this time into manuscripts show a great advance over preceding ones, both in drawing and coloring; though still quaint in style, the heads are remarkable for sincere and truthful expression, and the draperies for the broad and simple arrangement of their folds, and the sober and harmonious character of the tints employed on them.

Among the present examples extant of twelfth century illumination are those contained in three enormous volumes in the British Museum. The work is a Passionale, or collection of lives of saints, written toward the

close of the century, in double columns, on vellum, in the large characters which about that time began to be used, and which form the link between the round open



INITIAL FROM A TENTH CENTURY BIBLE PRESENTED TO CHARLES THE BOLD.

letter of the preceding century and a half, and the square or Gothic letter of a later period. From the great number of German saints introduced into these volumes and from the legend of Count Ludovic, inserted at the close of the second, we may conclude that the work was written for the monastery of Arnstein, on the river Lahn, about a mile above Coblenz, in which monastic house, as appears by a memorandum at the end of the last volume, it was still preserved in 1464.

An example of nearly the same period and style as this Passionale is the copy of a Bible in the British Museum, in the Vulgate version, comprised in two very large folio volumes, and written on vellum in double columns. The illuminated letters prefixed to each book are more richly colored and more highly finished than those found in the former. Prefixed to the first is the Epistle of Jerome to Paulinus, with a full-length figure of the writer sitting at a desk, while a monk holds out an inkhorn to him. In the first book of Kings are also introduced interesting illustrations of costume in the figures of Goliath in chain mail and of Saul destroying himself. The second volume commences with the Psalter, the initial letter of which is magnificently executed, and the New Testament is embellished with figures of the Apostles.

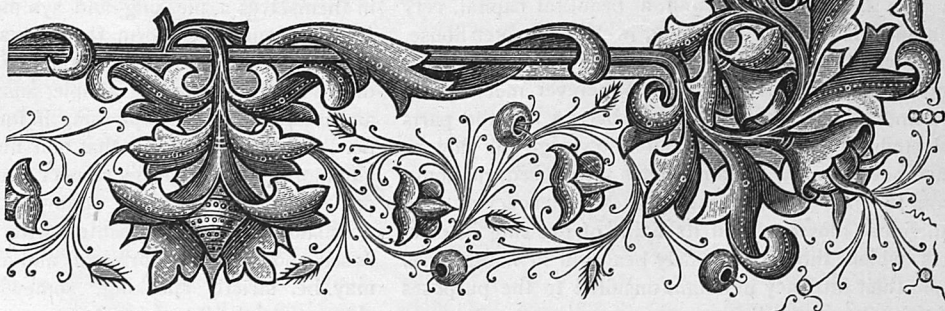
From the end of this century books became reduced in size, and their contents exhibited a similar diminution in all their decorative features.

The principal capital letters were commonly inclosed within square frames, at the angles and along the sides of which were frequently placed medallions, the one half

encroaching upon the border within, and the other on the plain margin without. These medallions contained figures of prophets, saints, minstrels playing on various instruments, or other illustrations of the text to follow. Between the outer ornamental border and the letter the ground, of a dark color, usually blue, was elaborately diapered. The letter itself was composed of the most delicate and intricate interlacing of small bands of light brown, green, and blue, alternately. These bands commenced with the heads of snakes or fanciful reptiles, from which small leaves occasionally projected, and terminated in full bunches of foliage. Entangled in these folds are found dogs, rabbits, squirrels, and other animals, most carefully drawn and in every conceivable attitude. These, like the figures in the medallions, are on raised and burnished gold grounds. All these details are surrounded by a clear and intensely black outline, evidently composed of lampblack and gum.

During the thirteenth century several important changes took place in the art of illumination. In the beginning of it, highly burnished gold, on raised grounds, came into general use as the backgrounds, both to figures and ornaments, in lieu of the more simple application of leaf gold, found in earlier books. At the same time the delicate material called uterine vellum began to be employed, and on its exquisitely smooth and even surface the scribes produced writing frequently so minute that to decipher it the aid of a glass becomes necessary. This writing

was as remarkable for its beauty and accuracy as for its microscopic character; another peculiarity in the small figures found in manuscripts in the latter part of this and during the following century is the marvelous fineness of the lines by which the features of the face are shown; as these are without any gradation to indicate light and shade, and, as the faces are only slightly tinted or left altogether free from color, they mark a distinct style in art. These lines are frequently drawn with wonderful truth, beauty, and propriety of expression, while the hair is varied with stronger lines massed in flowing curls. A very bold and elegant style of ornamentation, in the fifteenth century, was employed on the margins of manuscripts, in which the foliage surrounding them was made to grow out of the body of the capital letter commencing the text, or at the beginning of a chapter in any part



BORDER FROM A FIFTEENTH CENTURY MANUSCRIPT.

of the page. Decorations of this character are found in perfection in English books. The letter R with text on the opposite page, and the portion of a border on

page 36, are favorable examples of these peculiarities. The letter and text are taken from a large folio Bible in the British Museum, measuring twenty-four inches in height by fourteen inches in width. It is profusely enriched with illuminations. The commencement of each book has a marginal border, surrounding and dividing the text into columns, and containing a large initial, sometimes composed of foliage.

PRACTICAL HINTS FOR ILLUMINATORS.

II.

NEARLY all the periods of illuminating were characterized by peculiar styles of coloring. In many works the colors are treated flat, without any attempt to give a raised effect. The ornaments of this style are usually executed on the vellum alone, without any ground color. In others, a relieved effect is given to the ornamental details by shadows.

In illuminations of this school, the enrichments are generally worked upon a ground of gold or color. In illuminations of the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries, white line-work upon color was largely used. In the party-colored initials and ornaments of the fourteenth century, a white line generally divided the colors, which were at times outlined with black. Beautiful surface decoration was executed in white upon the various rich ornaments of the thirteenth century and early fourteenth.

In shading leaf-work, the illuminator must use the harmonies; such as the deeper tones of the color employed to ground the leaf, or those colors nearest to it on the color circle. For instance, if the leaf be light blue, it should be shaded with dark blue; if normal blue, with blue running to purple. If red, it should be shaded with the tones of crimson (red purple) running to purple as before. The reverse side of the leaves, or turnovers, should be colored with

the full contrasting color of the leaf proper. For instance, if the leaf be blue, shaded with dark blue or purple, the turnover should be orange, shaded with scarlet running to crimson. Leaves may be lighted up with delicate hatchings in gold, white, or very light colors. The deepest shadows may be executed with hatching in black.

Blue, the primary of the first importance, should ever be most largely used in all works of decorative art. Its perfect contrasting color is orange; and its most perfect harmonies are those tones of itself produced by its admixture with white or black.

Red, the second primary, has green for its contrasting color; and all the scales of oranges and crimsons for its harmonies.

Yellow, the primary of most light and power, has

purple for its contrast, and the compounds of itself with white, and the scale of oranges for its perfect harmonies.

These colors, therefore, cannot be used together in juxtaposition with injurious effect.

Green, the contrasting color of red, should be sparingly used in illuminating, being a lighting-up color. It must never be employed for its own value, but only from its power on other tints, which it lights up, or gives vigor to, in an extraordinary degree.

Gold takes the place of yellow in the perfect group of the three primaries with great success; and perhaps nothing is more commonly seen in nearly all departments of decorative art than the triplet—blue, red, and gold.

Gray may be introduced into almost any combination of colors, and forms a beautiful harmony associated with brilliant hues of blue and crimson.

est energies in the ornamentation of their initial letters; and we advise the student also to bestow great care upon those he introduces into his illuminations. The letters may be placed upon solid panels of gold or colors, or surrounded with rich masses of delicate line work, as may be observed in some fourteenth century MSS.

The letters themselves may be executed in various ways. This depends greatly, of course, on the period of illumination the student has selected to work after. The thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth century schools are the best adapted to modern use and requirements.

Miniature subjects, scroll and leaf-work, or diapering, may be used to fill up the centre of the initials. If miniatures are anywhere introduced, they must have immediate reference to the subject of the text.

There are several ways in which a border may be composed: it may be made to entirely surround the text, placed upon a background of gold or color; it may extend only round three or two sides, or it may be confined to one only.

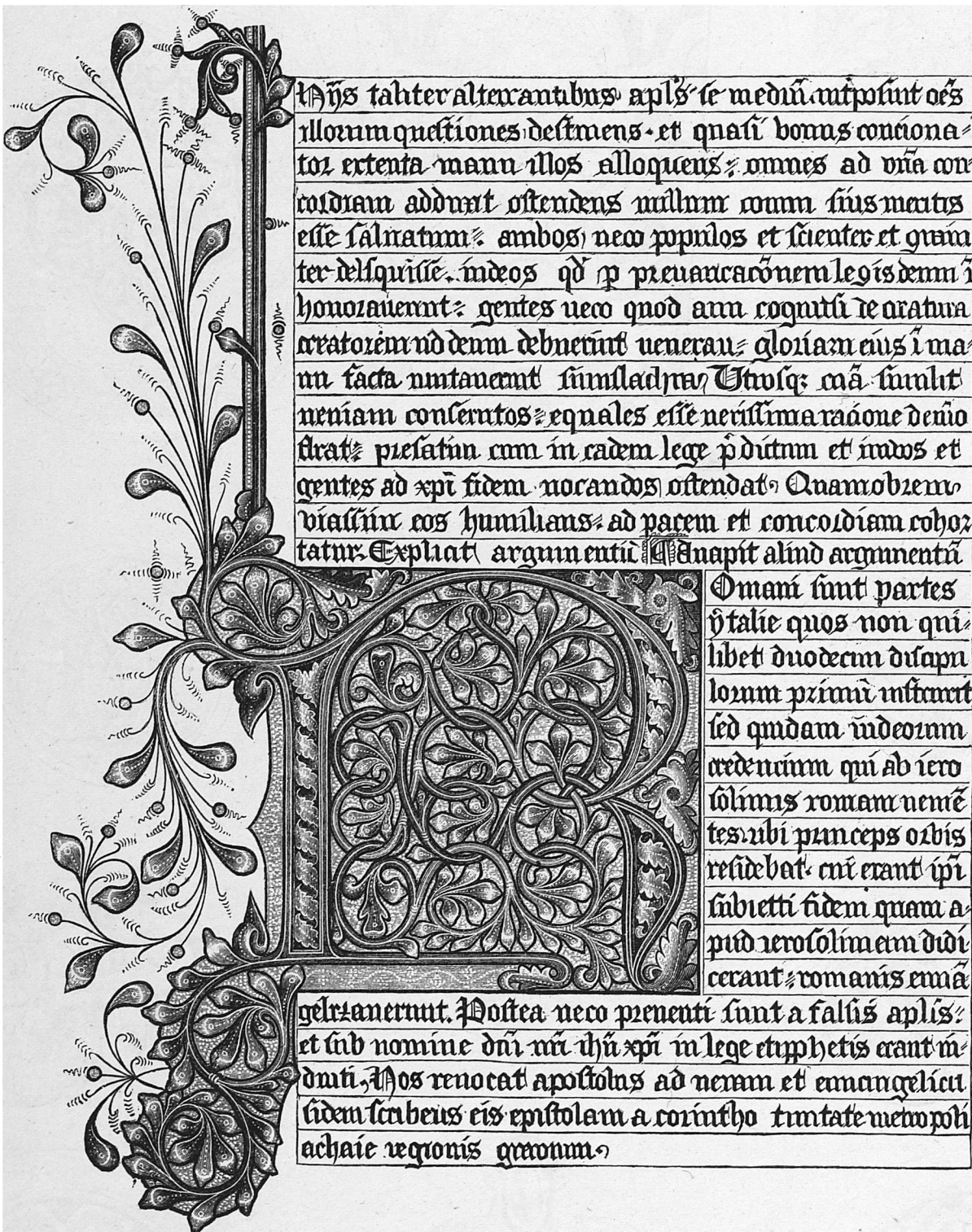
Of all these, the complete border is the richest, and is the form most generally to be found in the MSS. of the fourteenth century.

All the lines employed in design must be flowing and graceful; a great deal of the beauty of an illumination depends upon this. Nothing is more offensive to the eye than a broken outline or scroll.

The illuminator must not overcrowd his composition, for he will gain little by crowding ornament at all. He must seek after repose, simplicity, and elegance.

No ornament or detail must be executed carelessly; each leaf and bud, however small or insignificant, should be finished as if it were the only ornament on the page. The student need never hope to attain eminence in his art unless each thing he does is done with his whole might. One who would become in truth an illuminator must not for one moment think that weeks or months will terminate his study. If it did, the charm which

dwells with the art would be of short duration, instead of increasing, as it ever does, day by day continually. That person is no illuminator who for a time takes up the instruments of the art, to execute a book-mark for a friend, or to adorn some lady's album with gold and color, and then consigns them to their case until some like occasion prompts their use. How different is he, the true illuminator, who toils, yet knows it not, day after day, in every spare hour, and through the night far into the hours of morning, for love of the art itself; who wanders abroad among the works of Nature that he may derive new inspiration; who bears home to his quiet studio plants and flowers, and converts their beautiful forms into the delicate designs which are to adorn the labors of his hands, careless whether other eyes see them or not! Such a man has the true spirit.



ILLUMINATED PAGE FROM A FIFTEENTH CENTURY BIBLE IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM.

The student, while studying this department of art, should experiment with numerous combinations of colors, taking note of those which prove most pleasing for future use. A collection of combinations of colors, made and preserved in a small scrap book, would prove of value for the sake of reference.

The student is recommended not to overdo his ornamental portions, for one is apt to think that the text is secondary to the illumination, and not that the illumination is intended to decorate the text. A rather large margin adds greatly to the beauty of the illumination, and never fails to increase its effect and importance.

The initial letter should not be too large in itself or in its detail, for it will outweigh the border and text: this is to be avoided if possible.

The illuminators of old loved to expend their great-